

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY / MIDDLE EAST UPDATE
September 29 - October 6, 2011

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1. [Panetta Cites Need for Greater Investment in NATO](#) (10-05-2011)

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta told Europeans that NATO members need to take this moment to make the case for a greater investment in the alliance so it remains relevant to the security challenges of the future.

“We are nearing the end of a successful campaign in Libya, and are closer than ever to achieving our shared goals in Afghanistan,” [Panetta said in an October 4 speech](#) at Carnegie Europe, which is the Brussels branch of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

“But there is no doubt that this is also a time of challenge to the alliance,” he said. “The international security environment is complex and is rapidly changing.”

Many on both sides of the Atlantic have recognized that NATO nations are at a critical moment, he said. NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen has warned about the risks of a weak and divided Europe unless it adequately invests in its own security, he said.

The United States and its NATO allies must depend on each other to share the burden of protecting common interests, Panetta told Europeans. And that requires each country to commit to addressing growing gaps in NATO military capabilities as members confront the challenges of fiscal austerity, he said.

Panetta said NATO efforts in Afghanistan and Libya show the necessity and effectiveness of the alliance; both missions also show growing gaps that need to be addressed.

These capability gaps are being exposed precisely when every defense minister in NATO is dealing with increasing fiscal challenges at home, Panetta said. He noted that by at least one estimate defense spending in Europe has fallen about 2 percent a year for a decade.

“As a result, much-needed modernization investment has been deferred,” Panetta said. The notion that the U.S. defense budget can cover alliance shortcomings is not true, he said.

“Make no mistake about it, we are facing dramatic cuts with real implications for alliance capability,” he said. As an example, Panetta said that as a result of agreements between President Obama and Congress, the Pentagon will cut more than \$450 billion in spending over the next 10 years.

Defense spending and enhancing capabilities will continue to be a challenge for NATO alliance members, Panetta said, and will have to be addressed going into the 2012 NATO Summit that is scheduled for May 15–22 in Chicago. The NATO Summit will be held simultaneously with a Group of Eight Summit.

“We live in a world of growing danger and growing uncertainty, where we face threats from violent extremism, nuclear proliferation, rising powers, and from cyber attack,” Panetta said. “We cannot predict where the next crisis will occur. But we know that we are stronger when we confront these threats together.”

Panetta visited the Middle East to meet with Palestinian and Israeli leaders before traveling to Brussels for the annual NATO defense ministers’ meeting October 5–6. The NATO defense ministers are expected to discuss current operations in Afghanistan and Libya, as well as security in Kosovo and concerns about maritime piracy off the coast of Somalia.

[Remarks by Defense Secretary Panetta at Carnegie Europe](#)
[Panetta, NATO Defense Ministers Meet in Brussels](#)
[Secretary Panetta, Ambassador Patterson at Media Round Table](#)

2. Amb. Rice’s Remarks to Press on Veto of U.N. Resolution on Syria (10-04-2011)

Remarks by Ambassador Susan E. Rice, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, at the Security Council Stakeout, on the Veto of a UN Security Council Resolution on Syria

Ambassador Rice: Good evening. I hadn't intended to get a head start on everyone else but since — this has been quite a sad day, most especially for the people of Syria, but also for this Security Council.

The people of Syria, who seek nothing more than the opportunity to achieve their universal human rights and to see their aspirations for freedom and liberty achieved, have been slapped in the face by several members of this Security Council today.

And as I said in the chamber, I think the people of Syria and the people of the region have had today the opportunity to determine who among us stand with the people of the region in their quest for a

better future, and who will go to whatever lengths are necessary to defend dictators who are on the warpath.

I am happy to take a few questions.

Reporter: Ambassador Rice, is this a failure of the European policy in the Security Council? Because they practically emptied the resolution of teeth, or is this, have they been duped by Russia, and China, and the BRICs? Or has this exposed China, Russia, and the rest of the BRIC countries? You did say there was a 'cheap ruse' of reaction, basically, by the Russians. What do you expect next? Can you explain these three, four elements of what I just asked you from your point of view as the U.S.?

Ambassador Rice: Well first of all, the United States' view has been, and remains, that this Council ought to pass a resolution that contains real sanctions and that is what we proudly co-sponsored in August, and what we think is still warranted. Now, I'm not going to sit here and Monday-morning quarterback, or Monday-evening quarterback, how this has unfolded. We supported this resolution because we thought it was a step, had it been passed, in the right direction.

But the fact that, after days, if not a couple of weeks, of strenuous effort on the part of the Europeans to achieve the consensus that ought to have been possible, that that effort of goodwill on their part was met with the response today, I think, says the most about the people who were unable to support this resolution and those who cast the veto.

Reporter: Thank you Madam Ambassador. Do you think that diplomacy has reached a dead-end regarding how the international community should deal in regard with the situation in Syria?

Ambassador Rice: No, I don't think diplomacy or pressure has reached a dead-end. I mean, the fact of the matter is, despite the vote that we saw today in the Council, the majority of members supported the resolution. The majority of members would have supported a sanctions resolution. And the countries in the region are, every day, coalescing and raising their voices against what is transpiring in Syria. This is not, as some would like to pretend, a Western issue. We had countries all over the world supporting this resolution today, and we have countries throughout the region who've been very clear that the brutality of the Asad regime has to end and that the behavior of the regime is absolutely intolerable.

Reporter: Madam Ambassador, would you consider keeping on your reset diplomacy strategy with Russia considering the result it gives you, at least at the Security Council?

Ambassador Rice: Well, I'm not sure it "gives us," but let us say, given the result — look, we have many, many issues on which we work very constructively with Russia — from non-proliferation to arms control to Iran to North Korea, and many, many others — and will continue to do so. On this issue, we and others had a fundamental disagreement with Russia and other countries. And we think history will bear out who was on the right side and who was on the wrong side. But they are a country able to make their sovereign choices and we are able to make ours, and we can still work together and cooperate on a vast range of issues.

Reporter: Yeah, sure, Ambassador Rice, in the chamber you said, this is not about Libya, it's about countries that want to sell weapons to Syria. And I guess what I wonder is, is the countries, say the IBSA countries, countries like Brazil and others, do you think that what happened on Libya, that a resolution was passed, and then NATO bombed — from the point of view of those countries, things

went further than they authorized — do you really think it had no impact on this? Or do you think all of those countries are selling weapons?

Ambassador Rice: I think this is an excuse. I think the vast majority of countries, even today on the Council that were not able to vote in favor of this text, know that this was a resolution that, in substance, was unobjectionable. And their decisions to vote as they did may have had a lot less to do with the text than it did with some effort to maintain solidarity among a certain group of countries. So I think Libya has been beat to death, overused, and misused as an excuse for countries not to take up their responsibilities with respect to Syria.

Reporter: Just a quick follow-up, Ambassador, because — a good follow up — because, you know, the language you used in describing the Russian behavior today, you know, “Cheap ruse” — this is strong language. But then you're saying here we're going to go on business as usual and...

Ambassador Rice: I didn't say business as usual. I said we are two countries with different interests that disagree on this issue.

Reporter: Take it from here on, in regards to Syria.

Ambassador Rice: Well, first of all, the United States has been very strong and unequivocal in its leadership, on a national basis and on a global basis, in condemning and sanctioning the Asad regime. And we are going to continue, as I said in the Council, to maintain our efforts and maintain pressure on the Asad regime.

It is on the wrong side of history. It is not going to get what it seeks by the continual repression and killing and imprisoning of its people. It doesn't work and it won't succeed, and sooner or later that will be self-evident.

Thank you.

3. Key U.S. Accomplishments at the UN Human Rights Council 18th Session (10-01-2011)

The eighteenth session of the Human Rights Council came to an end in Geneva on September 30, 2011. This was the seventh regular session since the United States joined in September 2009. Though much work remains, in particular ending the Council's disproportionate focus on Israel, U.S. engagement thus far has resulted in significant improvements to the Human Rights Council as a multilateral forum for promoting and protecting human rights. Accomplishments include groundbreaking resolutions on freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, preventing discrimination against women, LGBT human rights, religious tolerance, and the creation of monitoring mechanisms for Cote d'Ivoire, Libya, Iran, and Syria. Key accomplishments at this session include:

Sudan: The United States worked with the Africa Group on a consensus resolution that renews the mandate of the independent expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan for one year, expresses international concern at the humanitarian situations in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, and calls upon all parties to immediately end violence and halt clashes. The United States underlined our core message regularly during the session: we are deeply concerned about ongoing reports of human rights violations and abuses, including unlawful killing and other violence with impunity, arbitrary arrests and detention of journalists, and restrictions on freedom of assembly. In

Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, where there are credible allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity, the United States will continue to support an independent and credible investigation to hold those responsible to account.

South Sudan: The United States joined South Sudan and the Africa Group on a consensus resolution that welcomes South Sudan as a new State and member of the United Nations and also welcomes the government's commitment to strengthen national human rights mechanisms. The resolution calls upon the government to strengthen ongoing cooperation with the UN Mission in South Sudan on human rights issues, and also invites the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to assist the new government.

Libya: The United States worked closely with Morocco, Libya, and others on a consensus resolution that recommends the UN General Assembly lift Libya's suspension from the Human Rights Council. The resolution also welcomes the commitments made by the new Libyan government to uphold its obligations under international human rights law and to cooperate with international human rights mechanisms, including the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the international Commission of Inquiry established by the Human Rights Council at the February 2011 Special Session on Libya.

Yemen: The United States worked with delegations from Yemen and the Netherlands, as well as others on a consensus resolution that calls for a rapid political transition and transfer of power, as outlined in the plan drawn up by the Gulf Cooperation Council, and condemns ongoing violations of human rights in Yemen. The resolution notes the Yemeni government's announcement to launch transparent and independent investigations, which will adhere to their international obligations. The resolution also calls upon the Government of Yemen and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to develop a framework for dialogue and cooperation in the field of human rights.

Syria: At an interactive dialogue on Syria, the United States welcomed the prompt formation of the Commission of Inquiry mandated at the August 2011 Special Session on Syria. The U.S. government called on the Syrian authorities to allow the Commission of Inquiry, international humanitarian agencies, and international media unrestricted access to report on the abhorrent conditions inside Syria. The United States called on the Assad regime to step aside, and to stop killing and torturing the Syrian people immediately.

Israeli/Palestinian Issues: The United States continues to believe the disproportionate focus on Israel diminishes the credibility and effectiveness of the Council. The United States continues to strongly oppose the permanent agenda item devoted to Israel-related issues, which is the only agenda item devoted to a specific country. There were no resolutions under the Israel-specific agenda item at this session.

Fighting Racism: The United States worked with Brazil to co-sponsor a consensus resolution that urged States to fight against racism and strengthen democracy. The United States is committed to working with our global partners, both bilaterally and multilaterally, in the fight against racism and racial discrimination. The United States also recognized the importance of tolerance and reconciliation, citing the powerful example of Nelson Mandela, as tools in the effort to foster more just, tolerant, and equal societies.

4. Renewing America's Global Leadership (09-30-2011)

Remarks at the Kumpuris Distinguished Lecture Series

SECRETARY CLINTON: Thank you. Oh, my goodness. Oh. Dean, that story brought back so many – (laughter) – extraordinary memories of that cold December day, standing in the water in the waders, and I'll only add a few little details. (Laughter.) I didn't think it was uncharacteristic at all when they said, "Go ahead. You take the first shot." (Laughter and applause.) So the pressure was building. It was really lucky. And it was a banded duck, which I learned later was quite significant. We had a wonderful time because next to his wonderful wife, Kula, I adored Frank Kumpuris. I thought he was one of the finest, most extraordinary men I have ever met, before or since. And I knew that he would watch out for me a little bit, with both Dean and Dr. Jones, so we had a good time that day.

But then I got back to the governor's mansion. And since I'd been gone, my daughter had gotten up, and she asked Bill where I was. And Bill said, "Well, she went duck hunting." And Chelsea met me at the back door. (Laughter.) She said, "Mommy, did you kill a duck?" I said, "Yes, I did. I did. I killed a duck." She got big tears in her eyes. She goes, "Mommy, that duck could have been some little duck's mother." (Laughter.) And it was shortly before Christmas, but it took a day or two before she got over that. But it is a wonderful memory that I cherish, as I do so many memories from our extraordinary times and friendships and experiences here in Arkansas.

And I want to thank Dean and the entire Kumpuris family because your generous support of this lecture series and this school has been so welcome, and we are deeply grateful. And I know, too, that Frank, who was so civic-minded and public spirited, would have loved sitting in the front row right next to you, Kula, and he'd probably have about a hundred questions for whoever was standing up on this stage.

I also want to thank Stephanie, not only for welcoming us but for everything you've done to make the Presidential Center such a success, Stephanie. You've been a real solid rock through all the years. (Applause.) I also want to thank our wonderful long-time friends Bruce Lindsey and Skip Rutherford for their leadership and the entire team here at the Foundation and the faculty, staff, and especially the students at the Clinton School.

There are so many familiar faces here in the audience, and I am grateful for each and every one of you. I want to just mention a very few. I want to mention Dale and Betty Bumpers. Betty Bumpers was such a great first lady for the state of Arkansas in every way. (Applause.) And just the other day, Betty called Bill and said, "How worried should we be that the economy and all these cuts are going to undermine immunization efforts for our children?" So she has been consistent, working on taking care of our children for long before I knew her, and ever since I had been honored to know her.

And Dale, I am so pleased to see you looking as handsome and roguish as usual. (Laughter and applause.) And if you haven't seen the Dale Bumpers-David Pryor Show, it is quite a spectacle. And dear David and Barbara, who have been our friends and our colleagues through so many years, Fayetteville to Little Rock to Washington and back. And Jim Guy, it's wonderful you're here.

And Carol Tucker Foreman, welcome back to Arkansas and thank you for the great battles you have waged on behalf of our food and nutrition and our children's health over all these years.

And Bill Bowen, who many of you know is a great business leader over the years in Arkansas, but I knew him because occasionally he would let me come teach at the First Methodist Church Bowen

Sunday School Class – (laughter) – where he would quietly but effectively critique everything I was saying about the lesson of the day.

And there are so many others who served in Arkansas and served in Washington in Bill's administrations, and it is great to see you, and I'm looking forward to having time with all of you over the next two days.

Before I begin, I want to say a few serious words about events because we had a very significant event in Yemen earlier today, when we learned of the death of Anwar al-Awlaki, a leader and chief propagandist of al-Qaida's most active and dangerous affiliate, al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula. This is the terrorist group that tried to blow up an airplane filled with innocent people on Christmas Day in 2009, that attempted to bring down U.S. cargo planes in 2010. Awlaki took a leading role in those plots and in spreading an ideology of hate and violence. But today, like Usama bin Ladin and so many other terrorist leaders who have been killed or captured in recent years, he can no longer threaten America, our allies, or peace loving people anywhere in the world.

Today we are all safer, but we recognize that the threat remains, that al-Qaida does maintain the ability to plan and carry out attacks, and that our vigilance is required. So we will, along with our partners and allies, continue to ratchet up the pressure, continue pursuing a comprehensive strategic approach to counterterrorism, and work to deny al-Qaida and its affiliates safe haven anywhere in the world. It seems a long way from this absolutely glorious day here at the library after dedicating the bridge and the Bill Clark Wetlands, but it is what I spend a lot of my time working on and doing every day.

And it's such a pleasure for me to be back here to have a chance to once again see old friends and talk about what's going on in our lives, but also to remember that we are interconnected in ways large and small to people very far from where we are today.

I remember the first time I flew in to the Little Rock Airport all those years ago. Bill picked me up and drove me around Little Rock, then up through the Arkansas River Valley and the Ouachita Mountains to Hot Springs. And just as I had been told by Arkansas' biggest booster, who I first laid eyes on as he was saying, "Not only that, we grow the biggest watermelons in the world," I was very taken with this beautiful state and the hospitality and welcome that I received. Every time I come back, I get that same feeling, and the years we spent here raising our daughter and being involved in the public schools – Chelsea saw her first-grade teacher earlier today – just brings back a flood of memories. So I want to thank Little Rock and Arkansas for everything that you have done and continue to do for me and for our family.

And I'm very proud of every part of this center – the library, the foundation, and the school. And this year, the Clinton School students are completing more than 30 international public service projects in 19 countries on all 6 continents. I'm very proud of what you are doing. (Applause.)

And I also know from my extensive travels on behalf of our country how essential it is that Americans keep reaching out and that we keep opening doors and searching for better understanding. So what you are doing is absolutely essential, and it embodies what Bill and I have tried always to keep at the center of our work, that the point of public service is to produce results. As Bill said earlier today at the bridge dedication, it's a very simple test: Are people better off when you stopped than when you started? And that's not only true for elective office, but it's true in the business world; it's true in the not-for-profit world, the academic world. Are children better off, will they have a better future, and are we coming together or dividing?

So we have a deep responsibility with the Clinton School that we care very much about, and I have been looking forward to being here with you. Now, one might think, “Well, what does any of this mean for a Secretary of State?” Because I’m well aware that with what’s going on in our economy and the daily struggles that so many Arkansans and Americans are facing, it’s hard to shift focus to something happening in the country of Yemen or Afghanistan and Pakistan or China or Brazil. And there are some – and I hear their voices – who argue that the United States can no longer afford to be a global leader, that we should pull back from the world and lower our ambitions. But I am here today to tell you that nothing could be further from the truth. The fact is – (applause) – number one, we have no choice; the world is on our doorsteps whether we invite it or not. And number two, we cannot afford not to be engaging. Whether it’s opening new markets for American businesses or breaking up terrorist plots and bringing the wars of the last decade to a successful close, our work around the world holds the key to our prosperity and security right here at home.

Now, there are many examples of this, and some of them are controversial. But take, for example, the pending free trade agreement with South Korea. It is expected to create 70,000 American jobs if Congress approves it, including thousands right here in Arkansas because tariffs on most agricultural exports are phased out. That will make a real difference in people’s lives.

From the first days of the Obama Administration, we have worked to renew America’s global leadership because we want it to deliver more for the American people. And for the last decade our foreign policy has been focused on places where we faced the greatest dangers. And responding to threats will always be central to our foreign policy; but it cannot be our foreign policy. If all we do is focus on the threats and the dangers, we will miss the opportunities. And in the decade ahead we need to focus just as intensely on the places where we have the greatest opportunities as on those places where we have faced the greatest dangers.

Now, what that means for me every day is looking for ways to support the so-called Arab Awakening, the transitions sweeping across the Middle East and North Africa, they are some of the most consequential, historic changes of the last many decades, certainly since the fall of the Soviet Union.

It also means renewing America’s preeminent role in the Asia Pacific. That is, for our future, the most consequential region of the world. It means elevating the role of economics in foreign policy, the most vibrant source of our power and a vital part of driving our economic recovery right here at home.

It means working to empower women and girls around the world, a piece of unfinished business of humanity. It means changing the way we do foreign policy, so we are using 21st century tools and harnessing what I call smart power to produce results.

So we are working on all of these fronts and more. But I deeply understand why so many Americans today are worried about what lies ahead for them, for their families, and for our country. Some even wonder, looking at the landscape of problems here at home and abroad, whether America is still up to the job. Well, we have lived through times of anxiety before.

I remember when I was growing up the fear was we were falling behind the Soviets in technology and ambition. I remember my fifth-grade teacher that we needed to all study mathematics so that the Russians wouldn’t get ahead of us and that President Eisenhower himself expected us to learn math. That made a big impression on me. I tried and hoped that the President would give me some credit for effort. (Laughter.)

When I started practicing law here in Little Rock, our country faced stagflation and oil shocks. When I moved with Bill and Chelsea to Washington, as he was inaugurated President, it was outsourcing, the apparent decline of American competitiveness and a budget deficit which at the time seemed unbelievable, about, what, \$350 billion. But each time we rose to whatever challenge faced us. American entrepreneurs and innovators proved the naysayers wrong. We out-worked, we out-built, and we simply out-competed every rival. When it mattered most, we put the common good first ahead of ideology, party, or personal interest.

So our people and generations of American leaders built a resilient economy, a global architecture of institutions and norms that protected not just our interests but the interests of all people who wanted a better life in a rules-based international order. That was exceptional leadership from an exceptional country. I remember when Bill and I went to East Asia when he was governor. It was the first trade mission ever to places that seemed very far away from Arkansas, like Japan and Hong Kong. The people we met in Asia didn't see an America in trouble; they saw a beacon of opportunity and liberty, a superpower underwriting peace and security in the region, and a dynamic market driving global growth. And lucky for us, they also saw lots of Arkansas soybeans they wanted to buy.

Now, that view of America was right then and it's right now. In the last decade, we've lived through terrorist attacks, two long wars, and a global financial crisis. Through it all, America remains an exceptional country. And the sources of America's greatness are more durable than perhaps many realize. Yes, our military is by far the strongest, our economy is by far the largest in the world, but our workers are still the most productive, and our universities are the gold standard. Our core values of equality, tolerance, opportunity, are an inspiration to people everywhere.

So yes, we do have real challenges, but there's no doubt we have the capacity to meet them. Just look here in Arkansas. Arkansas farmers are finding new markets for poultry, cotton, and rice, and those exports are supporting tens of thousands of jobs on and off the farm. Arkansas manufacturers are selling aerospace components and electronics, chemicals, and plastics to new customers all over the world. In 2000, Arkansas exported only \$20 million worth of goods to China. Last year, it topped \$336 million. (Applause.) And this summer, Governor Beebe delivered the keynote address at the first ever Arkansas-China Business and Economic Summit at the University of Central Arkansas.

Students across Arkansas are working to help solve problems, like in Bangladesh where they are supporting a farmer-to-farmer program that uses new technologies and new relationships to boost food production. And the State Department is doing everything we can to promote American business abroad. Foreign investment in Arkansas already directly supports more than 33,000 jobs, but I think that's just the beginning of what is possible. So we are making it a priority for our ambassadors to help American businesses to work with governors and mayors, like Governor Beebe and Mayors Mark Stodola and Patrick Hays, to have job-creating investments back here doing what we do best: making things and exporting those.

We're also working to bring down other countries' internal trade barriers that deny our companies a chance to compete fairly, including abusive regulatory regimes, currency manipulation, and lax labor and environmental standards. And we are standing up for the intellectual property rights of America's innovators – too often under attack nearly everywhere in the world. And to build up tomorrow's trading partners and create future opportunities for exporters, we are changing the way we do international development and focusing on investment rather than aid.

So everything I know tells me that we have the talent and the ingenuity and the work ethic to come through these current difficulties. But nothing is preordained. No outcome is inevitable. Leading the world in the years ahead will take the same hard work, clear-eyed choices, and commitment to shared sacrifice and service that built our country's greatness in the first place.

And ultimately, that responsibility doesn't rest on the shoulders of a president or a secretary of state or a governor or a senator or a mayor. It's really an obligation that belongs to all Americans. We have to step up. We have to improve our own efforts. We have to find both the common ground and the common good that has united us in the past.

Now, late last year, I held a town hall meeting in Pristina, Kosovo. This is a place where America made all the difference to the future of those people who survived a brutal effort at ethnic cleansing. In Pristina, if you ever go, there's a very large statue of Bill as a way of thanking him for his leadership. And next to the statue there is a little shopping area, and somebody started something called the Hillary Store, where they sell very nice clothing but, alas, no pant suits. (Laughter.) And so I went into the store and I said, "My goodness, I'm so surprised. Why on earth do you need a Hillary Store?" And the woman whose store it was very proudly told me they didn't want Bill to get lonely. (Laughter.)

So later at the town hall meeting, a man stood up and thanked me for everything America had done for his country. And like in so many places in the world, he and his neighbors continued to see American leadership as a linchpin to their own future success. And he asked me, "Will you help us so we could finally see the biggest and the brightest and the most beautiful parts of democracy and a new economy? Can the great American nation assist us in our struggle to restore our hope?" Just as in times past, that is what America still means to countless people around the world: opportunity, responsibility, community. And today, it is our chance and our great privilege to live up to that well-earned reputation of the past, to make the hard choices here at home and abroad that keep the promise of America alive and well. Yes, we have to keep putting people first and keep building those bridges, and don't stop thinking about tomorrow.

Thank you all. (Applause.)

5. Clinton Condemns Unwarranted Attack on U.S. Ambassador in Syria (09-30-2011)

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton condemned as unwarranted an attack on U.S. Ambassador to Syria Robert Ford and his aides in Damascus, Syria, on September 29 as they were conducting normal embassy business.

"This attempt to intimidate our diplomats through violence is wholly unjustified," [Clinton said during an afternoon press briefing](#) on September 29 in Washington.

Ford and several of his embassy aides were attacked in their vehicles while traveling to meet with a prominent Syrian reform movement figure and also were held up in an office for about an hour and a half by a pro-government mob, State Department deputy spokesman Mark Toner said.

The ambassador and his embassy staff were not harmed during the attack, and they returned to the embassy safely. Syrian security officers did arrive and helped secure a path for the ambassador and aides to leave the office, he added, and provided an escort on the return to the embassy.

Nations that signed the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations — Syria is a signatory — are expected to carry out and respect their obligations to protect and not impede the work of foreign diplomats in their countries. The embassy vehicles were damaged in the attack, and the embassy personnel were assaulted.

“We condemn this unwarranted attack in the strongest possible terms,” Clinton said. “We immediately raised this incident with the Syrian government, and we are demanding that they take every possible step to protect our diplomats according to their obligations under international law.”

It is the second attack on U.S. diplomats in Syria since a reform movement started in mid-March. In July pro-government protesters attacked the U.S. embassy in Damascus after Ford conducted a visit to the city of Hama.

“Ambassador Ford has shown admirable courage putting himself on the line to bear witness to the situation on the ground in Syria,” Clinton said. “He is a vital advocate for the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people now under siege by the Bashar al-Assad regime.”

At a [White House press briefing September 29](#), presidential spokesman James Carney told reporters that the assault on Ford and his aides is “unwarranted and unjustifiable. This is clearly part of an ongoing campaign to intimidate and threaten diplomats attempting to bear witness to the brutality of the Assad regime.”

“Day after day, Ambassador Ford puts himself at great personal risk to support the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people,” Carney noted.

6. Ambassador Rice at U.N. Security Council Debate on Afghanistan (09-29-2011)

Remarks from Ambassador Susan E. Rice, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, At a Security Council Debate on Afghanistan

Thank you, Mr. President. Foreign Minister Rassoul, thank you for being here today. You honor us with your presence and we're grateful for your remarks. Special Representative de Mistura, thank you for your briefing and your continued extraordinary service. I hope you will also convey to all of the staff of UNAMA the enduring gratitude of the United States, for the important work that they do every day throughout Afghanistan, under considerable hardship, for the benefit of the Afghan people. We are also grateful for the important contributions of Deputy Special Representative Martin Kobler, who is on his way to Iraq to be the new SRSG there.

This morning, I will focus my remarks on security, upcoming events that frame the 2014 transition, and the New Silk Road initiative.

Earlier this month, as you know, the U.S. Embassy compound in Kabul was attacked. Afghan National Security Forces have responsibility for Kabul and they responded ably. They ended the assault on the Embassy, there was minimal damage to Embassy property and our compound and no U.S. personnel were killed. However, the insurgent attack killed five Afghan national police and eleven other Afghans, including children. While the security situation in Afghanistan continues to

present challenges, notably including the insurgents continuing targeting of fellow Afghans, our goal remains to shift gradually to a supporting role, as Afghan National Security Forces continue to develop their capabilities. The deployment of additional U.S. military service members together with additional troops committed by our allies and partners has helped stabilize more of the country and shifted the momentum away from the insurgency. Together, we have made significant progress.

The tragic assassination of Afghanistan's former President, and Chairman of the Afghan High Peace Council, Professor Rabbani, has only strengthened our collective resolve. We will continue to work in support of the Afghan government and the Afghan people to end the insurgency, pursue justice against those who fund, direct, and carry out the violence, and realize a peaceful future for all Afghans.

President Obama has been clear that the strong U.S. relationship with Afghanistan will extend well beyond 2014. We continue to make progress on our Strategic Partnership document, which outlines our long-term cooperation during the transition period and beyond. As President Obama and President Karzai reaffirmed in their meeting last week, we will have a strategic partnership between our nations that provides a long-term framework for bilateral cooperation on security, economic and social development, and institution building.

As Afghanistan moves towards the 2014 transition, we know that government alone cannot grow Afghanistan's economy, so we must all continue to work to create an environment that attracts private-sector investment. Last week Foreign Minister Rassoul, German Foreign Minister Westerwelle, and Secretary of State Clinton met with 27 of Afghanistan's neighbors and partners to advance their shared vision of a New Silk Road. The New Silk Road is an Afghan-led venture — a rallying point for securing Afghan, regional, and international commitments to support Afghanistan's transition and develop a sustainable Afghan economy that will benefit the whole region. The creation of a New Silk Road will help Afghanistan and its neighbors to maximize the value of their natural resources, build human capacity, create jobs, generate revenue to pay for needed services, and capitalize on the region's economic potential. The New Silk Road will also promote women entrepreneurs, since we know that sustained and successful development depends on women becoming equal partners.

The international community has an important role to play in supporting Afghanistan and the region's efforts to make this vision a reality. The New Silk Road initiative will reinforce the search for diplomatic solutions to end the war in Afghanistan.

Mr. President, 2011 remains a pivotal year. The International Afghanistan Conference at the end of the year in Bonn will be a key opportunity for the Government of Afghanistan, its neighbors, and the international community to strengthen economic cooperation in the region. This will be complemented by regional efforts to strengthen mutual confidence and neighborly relations at the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Istanbul in November. We also welcome the start of the comprehensive review of UNAMA's mandated activities and the United Nations' support in Afghanistan.

We reaffirm our gratitude for the crucial and continued commitment of the United Nations. UNAMA is working in partnership with the government of Afghanistan for the benefit of all Afghans in their quest for peace, security, and stability.

Mr. President, we will continue to support the Afghan government and people, regional partners, and the international community as we work to establish stability and prosperity in Afghanistan and throughout the region.

Thank you.